

CFM Meeting for Baptism Preparation Class

To the leader:

The purpose of this meeting is to reach out to parents in baptism preparation courses and invite them to join CFM. The birth and baptism of a child is often a point in young married couples' lives when they are seeking a reconnection with or a greater participation in the Church. This meeting is designed to support the Baptism preparation curriculum as well as provide a vehicle, which will expose parents to the OJA method and the CFM experience.

This meeting is designed to be presented at the end of the formal Baptism preparation course. The presenting couple can provide a brief witness talk describing how CFM has been a way that they have become more involved in the parish community and strengthened their family. The chapter can then be discussed by the group. CFM can provide a closing reception for the group.

Opening Prayer

God, You are ever loving and faithful. You are the source of life.
Through Jesus, Your son, You have made the everlasting promise to share Your life forever.
Through the Spirit, the gift of Your Son, You impart new life on all who believe.
Through the Church, the people You call to faith, You embrace others with Your life.
We come in prayerful petition;
May the life we share be graced by You,
May our child be in Your care.
Help us reflect by our lives an awareness and appreciation of Your presence and promise.
Give us the faith we need to express the hope that our child will be reborn in Christ to live forever. Amen.*

Scripture reading: Matthew 28: 18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Why is it important for your child to be baptized?
- How do you expect to experience Jesus' presence as you raise your child?

Social Inquiry

A family is our most basic community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us and acts in the world... The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian Family the *Domestic Church* or *Church of the Home*. As families you carry out the mission of the Church of the Home when

You believe in God and that he cares about you in good times and in bad.

You love and value others. Children form a picture of God from the love they experience among the parents and godparents.

You foster intimacy. To share oneself and be accepted within a family is indispensable to forming a close relationship with the Lord.

You evangelize by expressing faith in God, acting in accord with Gospel values and setting examples of Christian living for your children and others.

You educate especially by example. Sometimes children listen & learn. Sometimes they teach us. Your wisdom and theirs comes from the same spirit.

You pray together, thanking God for blessings, reaching for strength, asking for guidance in crisis or doubt.

You serve one another sacrificing your own wants for the other's good. Your "deaths" and "risings" become compelling signs of Jesus' own life, death and resurrection

You forgive and seek reconciliation. When you do so, family members come to believe that, no matter what, they are still loved by you and God.

You celebrate life, whether for birthdays, weddings, births, death, first day of school or graduation, new jobs, old friends, family reunions, surprise visits, holy days and holidays. You come together when tragedy strikes or in joyful celebration...

You welcome the stranger, the lonely one, the grieving one into your home... the Gospel assures us that when we do this they are no longer strangers, but Christ.

You act justly in your community when you treat others with respect, stand against discrimination and racism, work to overcome hunger, illiteracy, poverty and homelessness.

You affirm life as a precious gift of God. You oppose whatever destroys life...Within your family you make peace.

You raise up vocations to the priesthood and religious life. This is especially fostered through family prayer and involvement in parish life...

--Based on *Follow the Way of Love*, U. S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, 1994

A family might do well to accept some imperfection; some falling short of its expectation that all the needs of parents, children, household and jobs can be met and harmonized. Dust under the beds, weeds in the garden, dishes in the sink...are inevitable. They don't mean that you have failed. They just mean that you are human and still learning. God isn't finished with any of us yet.

H. Richard McCord, "How to Balance Family Life and Work",
Ligourian, Sept. 1997

Based on our own personal experiences, Observe

1. How has having a child changed your life as husband and wife?
2. After reading about the Domestic Church in *Follow the Way of Love*, identify the items that remind you of your family of origin.
3. How did your family of origin practice the faith?

In light of Christ's teachings, Judge

1. What happens to a couple's priorities and lifestyle when a child is born?
2. What are the family traits make your own home a domestic church?
3. How can a couple continue to strengthen their bond as husband and wife after children are born?

Act

1. Set a time to discuss with your spouse:
 - a. *What changes will need to be made in your new family to become a "Church of the Home"?*
 - b. *What role will you play in teaching your children about their faith, being good husbands wives and parents?*
2. Investigate organizations that exist in your parish that support marriage and family life. As a family, become involved in one of them.

Closing prayer

Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to come together to share ideas and gain deeper understanding of what it means to be family. We pray that your Holy Spirit will guide us in our roles as family members. Bless and watch over us all. We ask this in Jesus' name.

* Opening prayer adapted from *We Celebrate Baptism*, Silver Burdett & Ginn, 1982.